Ontario

Ontario Women's Directorate

NEWS RELEASE

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ONTARIO GIRLS RECOGNIZED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Ontario Government Presents Inaugural Leading Girls, Building Communities Award

QUEEN'S PARK – Three exceptional Ontario girls who have made a marked difference in their communities are the first recipients of the provincial government's "Leading Girls, Building Communities award," Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello announced today.

"These extraordinary young women deserve to be celebrated. And that's why the McGuinty government is making them the first-ever winners of this award," said Pupatello at today's awards ceremony. "Our government is pleased to honour their outstanding achievements and to support their leadership and encourage it into adulthood."

Pupatello was joined by Tonika Morgan, founder of the Medina Collective and winner of the 2005 YWCA Toronto Young Woman of Distinction. "Part of creating a world of equality for girls and women is documenting and honouring their achievements. I am pleased that the Government of Ontario is furthering women's equality by holding these awards and I am honoured that they have asked to me to participate," said Ms. Morgan.

The award recipients are:

- Sarah Dell from Toronto receives the award for her volunteer efforts, which include founder and co-host of the Truelove-Dell Tribute, a post-secondary scholarship endowment fund for young people with a physical disability, Provincial Ambassador for Easter Seals, and her involvement in the Community Association for Riding for the Disabled;
- Nicole Turner from London receives the award for her work as a peer facilitator at the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, where she advocates on behalf of girls with physical disabilities;
- Jenna Lambert from Harrowsmith, who is the first female with a physical disability to swim

Minister along with the first provincial award winners and special guests at the awards ceremony. Front row (left to right): Award winners, Nicole Turner and Sarah Dell. Back row (left to right): Tonika Morgan, guest speaker; award winner Jenna Lambert; Deb Matthews, Parliamentary Assistant; and Emcee, Pooja Handa, news reporter.

First provincial award winners at the awards ceremony, (left to right): Nicole Turner, Jenna

across Lake Ontario, receives the award for raising over $170,000 to build a swimming pool for kids with disabilities at the Kingston Family YMCA.

The "Leading Girls, Buildings Communities" award was launched on March 2, 2007 to recognize young women, aged 18 years and under, who demonstrate exceptional leadership to improve the lives of others and champion issues that lead to positive social change in their schools, communities or province. Today's recipients, the first to receive this award, were presented with a framed certificate recognizing their contributions to their communities.

Other government initiatives that recognize and empower Ontario girls and women include:

Lambert and Sarah Dell.

Minister at the awards ceremony for the first provincial award winners.

- Equality Rules public education campaign, which teaches youth ages eight to 14 about healthy, equal and respectful relationships to help break the cycle of violence before it starts. For more info, visit www.equalityrules.ca
- the Women in Skilled Trades program, which has provided $4.6 million since 2003, helps hundreds of low-income women develop new skills in the skilled trades, find employment and achieve economic independence
- the Information Technology Training for Women program, which has invested $2.7 million over two years to provide information technology training for low-income women
- Sport and Empowerment of Females provincial conference, which brought together leaders from all parts of the community to share ideas on how to engage and empower women and girls through sport
- *Leading Women, Building Communities* awards to honour women for exceptional community leadership, and whose contribution improves the lives of women and girls in Ontario.

"These young women are making a difference in their communities," said Pupatello. "My congratulations to today's recipients for the leadership they have shown in making positive changes for the people and places around them."

- 30 -

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TOP

| Ontario Women's Directorate | About the OWD | News Releases | Facts and Statistics | How to Reach Us | Publications and Resources | A Guide to Government Services For Women | Related Sites | Grants | FAQ | Text Version |

| central site | feedback | search | site map | français |

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